

have received a letter from his Italian correspondent, in which, among the news of the day, there shall be the following paragraph : “ A Spanish gentleman, don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He is said to be nephew and sole heir to a rich widow of Coria. He is paying his addresses to a nobleman’s daughter ; but the family wishes to ascertain the validity of his pretensions. Send me word, therefore, whether you know this don Gaston, together with the amount of his aunt’s fortune. On your answer the marriage will depend. Parma, day of, &c.”

The old gentleman considered this trick as a mere ebullition of humour, a lawful stratagem of amorous warfare ; and the jade of a go-between, with conscience still more callous than her master’s, was delighted with the probability of the manœuvre. It seemed to be so much the more happily imagined, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking decisive measures, in the moment of surprise and indignation. Don George undertook to be the herald of my fickleness, and by way of colouring the contrivance more naturally, to confront the pretended correspondent with her. This project was executed as soon as formed. The father, with counterfeit emotions of displeasure, said to donna Helena : Daughter, it is not enough now to tell you that our relations inveigh against an alliance with don Austin’s murderer ; a still stronger reason

were gained ! The ruinous confusion of my household was the perpetual death's-head of my imagination. Yet this wilderness of melancholy ideas sheltered me from absolute distraction : sleep, which had shunned my wretched straw, now paid his readier visit to my soft and gentlemanly couch. Watching and wine too imparted a stronger narcotic to his poppies. My slumbers were profound ; and to all appearance, the day might have peeped in upon my repose, if I had not been awakened all at once by such sounds as rarely perforate a prison wall. I heard the thrum of a guitar, accompanying a man's voice. My whole attention was absorbed ; but the invisible musician paused, and left the fleeting impression of a dream. An instant afterwards, my ear was soothed with the sound of the same instrument, and the same voice.

Wisely the ant against poor winter hoards
 The stock which summer's wealth affords ;
 In grasshoppers, that must at autumn die,
 How vain were such an industry ?

Of love or fortune the deceitful light
 Might half excuse our cheated sight,
 If it of life the whole small time would stay,
 And be our sunshine all the day. *

* To have substituted, with a slight variation, these two stanzas from Cowley for a translation of the common-place couplet in the original, will probably not be thought to require any apology. They necessarily involve a change in the consequent reflections of our hero.

TRANSLATOR.

$2^{1/2} \sin 2$

*

Blas, said he, here is your linen. Do not be saving of it; there shall always be as many changes as you can possibly want. Well now! and how have you passed the night? Has the drowsy god administered his anodyne? I could have slept till this time, answered I, if I had not been awakened by a voice singing to a guitar. The cavalier who has disturbed your repose, resumed he, is a state prisoner; and his chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and is a very accomplished person. His name is don Gaston de Cogollos. You may meet as often as you like, and take your meals together. It will afford reciprocal consolation to compare your fortunes. There can be no doubt of your being agreeable to one another. I assured don Andrew how sensible I was of his indulgence in allowing me to blend my sorrows with those of my fellow-sufferer; and, as I betrayed some impatience to be acquainted with him, our accommodating warden met my wishes on the very same day. He fixed me to dine with don Gaston, whose prepossessing physiognomy and symmetry of feature struck me sensibly. Judge what it must have been, to make so strong an impression on eyes accustomed to encounter the dazzling exterior of the court. Figure to yourself a man fashioned in the mould of pleasure; one of those heroes in romance, who has only to shew his

face, and banish the sweet sleep from the eyelids of princesses. Add to this, that nature, who is generally bountiful with one hand and niggardly with the other, had crowned the perfections of Cogollos with wit and valour. He was a man, whose like, take him for all in all, we might not soon look upon again.

If this fine fellow was mightily to my taste, it was my good luck not to be altogether offensive to him. He no longer sang at night for fear of annoying me, though I begged him by no means to restrain his inclinations on my account. A bond of union is soon formed between brethren in misfortune. A close friendship succeeded to mere acquaintance, and strengthened from day to day. The liberty of uninterrupted intercourse contributed greatly to our mutual support; our burden became lighter by division.

One day after dinner, I went into his room, just as he was tuning his guitar. To hear him more at my ease, I sat down on the only stool; while he, reclining on his bed, played a pathetic air, and sang to it a ditty, expressing the despair of a lover and the cruelty of his mistress. When he had finished, I said to him with a smile: Sir knight, such strains as these could never be applicable to your own successes with the fair. You were not made to cope with female repulse. You think too well of me,

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
G I L B L A S
OF
SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
LESAGE.

A NEW EDITION:
WITH ENGRAVINGS FROM PAINTINGS
BY ROBERT SMIRKE, Esq. R. A.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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conqueror. I learnt it to be donna Helena; only daughter of don George de Galisteo, lord of a large domain near Coria. She had innumerable offers of marriage; but her father repulsed them all, because he meant to bestow her hand on his nephew don Austin de Olichera, who had uninterrupted access to his cousin while the settlements were preparing. This was no bar to my hopes: on the contrary, it whetted my eagerness: and the insolent pleasure of supplanting a favoured rival was, perhaps, at bottom equally my motive, with a more noble passion. My visual artillery was obstinately planted against my unyielding fair. Her attendant Felicia was not without the incense of a glance, to soften her rigid constancy in my favour; while nods and becks stood for the current coin of language. But all these efforts of gallantry were in vain: the maid was impregnable like her mistress: never was there such a pair of cold and cruel ones.

The commerce of the eyes being so unthrifty, I had recourse to different agents. My scouts were on the watch to hunt out what acquaintance Felicia might have in town. They discovered an old lady, by name Theodora, to be her most intimate friend, and that they often met. Delighted at the intelligence, I went point blank to Theodora, and engaged her by presents in my interest. She took my cause up heartily, promised to contrive an interview

HISTORY
OF
G I L B L A S

OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

The tender attachment between Gil Blas and dame Lorenza Sephora.

AWAY went I to Xelva with three thousand ducats under my charge, as an equivalent to Samuel Simon for the amount of his loss. I will have the honesty to own, that my fingers itched as I jogged along, to transfer these funds to my own account, and begin my stewardship in character; since every thing in this life depends upon setting out well. There was no risk in preferring instinct to principle; because it was only to ride about the country for five or six days, and come home upon a brisk trot as if I had done my business, and made the best of my way. Don Alphonso and his father would never

struck at the very life of all my hopes. But when no witnesses were by, I made myself full amends for having gulped down my rising indignation. I blustered and stormed; muttered blessings on them the wrong way, and swore outright: but all this without coming nearer to a decision on my own conduct. At one time, holding Lorenza in utter contempt, it was my good pleasure to give her up altogether, without condescending so far as to come to any explanation with the coquette. At another time, laying it down as a principle, that my honour was concerned in making the surgeon an example to all intriguers, I spirited up my courage to call him out. Thus dangerous valour prevailed over safe indifference. At the approach of evening I placed myself in ambuscade; and sure enough the gentleman did slink into the temple of my Vesta, with a fear of being found out that spoke rather unfavourably for the purity of his designs. Nothing short of this could have kept my rage alive against the chillness of the night air. I immediately quitted the precincts of the castle, and posted myself on the high road, where the gay deceiver was sure to be intercepted on his return. I waited for him with my fighting spirits on the full boil: my impatience increased with the lapse of time, till Mars and Bellona seemed to inhabit my frame, and enlarge it beyond human dimensions. At length my antagonist came in sight. I took a few strides, such as

partment in his own house. But I only looked upon this nobleman as a very distant resource; and determined, before laying any tax on his grateful recollection, to spend part of my ready cash in travelling over the provinces of Murcia and Grenada, which I had a very particular inclination to see. With this intention I took the Almanza road, and afterwards, following the route chalked out, travelled from town to town as far as the city of Grenada, without stumbling on any sinister occurrence. It should seem as if fortune, wearied out with the school-girl's tricks she had been playing me, was contented at last to leave me as she found me. But she still had her skittish designs upon me, as will be seen in the sequel.

One of the first persons I met in the streets of Grenada was signor don Ferdinand de Leyva, son-in-law, as well as don Alphonso, of the count de Polan. We were both of us equally surprised at meeting so far from home. How is this, Gil Blas? exclaimed he; to find you in this city! What the devil brings you hither? Sir, said I, if you are astonished at seeing me in this country, you will be ten times more so, when you shall know why I have quitted the service of signor don Cæsar and his son. Then I recounted to him all that had passed between Sephora and myself, without garbling the facts in any particular. He laughed heartily at the recital; then, recovering his gravity, My friend, said he, my

most superbly attired; one would sooner have taken them for temporal nobility than for spiritual understrappers. They were as proud as the devil; and gave themselves intolerably consequential airs. I could not help laughing in my sleeve, when I considered who and what they were, and how they behaved. Set a beggar on horseback! said I. These gentry are in luck to carry a pack without feeling the drag of it; for surely if they knew they were beasts of burden, they would not jingle their bells with so high a toss of the head. I ventured just to speak to a grave and portly personage who stood sentinel at the door of the archbishop's closet, to turn it upon its hinges as occasion might require. I asked him civilly if there was no possibility of speaking with my lord archbishop. Stop a little; said he with a supercilious demeanour and repulsive tone: his grace will shortly come forth, to go and hear mass; you may snatch an audience for a moment as he passes on. I answered not a single syllable. Patience was all I had for it; and it even seemed adviseable to try and enter into conversation with some of the jacks in office: but they began conning me over from the sole of my foot to the crown of my head, without condescending to favour me with a single interjection; after which they winked at one another, whispered, and looked out at the corners of their eyes, in derision of the liberty I had assumed, by intruding upon their select society.

not give me a moment to go on with my story. Ah ! is it you, exclaimed he, is it you of whom so fine a character has been given me ? I take you into my service at once ; you are a mine of literary utility to me. You have only to take up your abode here. Talking thus condescendingly, he supported himself between two ushers, and moved onwards after having given audience to some of his clergy, who had ecclesiastical business to communicate. He was scarcely out of the room, when the same officers who had turned upon their heel were now cap in hand to court my conversation. Here the rascals are, pressing round me, currying favour, and expressing their sincere joy at seeing me become as it were an heir loom of the archbishopric. They had heard what their master had said, and were dying with anxiety to know on what footing I was to be about him ; but I had the ill nature not to satisfy their curiosity, in revenge for their contempt.

My lord archbishop was not long before he returned. He took me with him into his closet for a little private conference. I could not but suppose that he meant to fathom the depth of my understanding. I was accordingly on my guard, and prepared to measure out my words most methodically. He questioned me first in the classics. My answers were not amiss ; he was convinced that I had more than a schoolboy's acquaintance with the Greek and Latin writers. He examined me next in

be the means of interesting your goodness to extricate him from the melancholy situation to which he has the misfortune at present to be reduced.

The prelate could not do otherwise than enquire the name of this licentiate. I told him it was Lewis Garcias. He is in despair at having drawn down your censure upon him. That Garcias, interrupted he, if I am not mistaken, was chaplain in a convent of nuns, and has been brought into the ecclesiastical court as a delinquent. I recollect some very heavy charges which have been sent me against him. His morals are not the most exemplary. May it please your grace, interrupted I in my turn, it is not for me to justify him in all points; but I know that he has enemies. He maintains that the authors of the informations you have received are more bent on doing him an ill office, than on vindicating the purity of religion. That very possibly may be the case, replied the archbishop; there are a great many firebrands in the world. Besides, though we should take it for granted that his conduct has not always been above suspicion, he may have repented of his sins; in short, the mercies of heaven are infinite, however heinous our transgressions. Bring that licentiate before me; I take off his suspension.

Thus it is that men of the most austere character descend from their altitudes, when interest or a favourite whim reduces them to the level of the frail. The archbishop granted, without a struggle, to the

ous post he had procured me. My expressions of satisfaction were so lively that he said : My dear Gil Blas, I am delighted to find you in such good humour with my uncle the archbishop. I am absolutely in love with him, answered I. His goodness to me has been such as I can never sufficiently acknowledge. Less than my present happiness could never have made me amends for being at so great a distance from don Cæsar and his son. I am persuaded, replied he, that they are both of them equally chagrined at having lost you. But possibly you are not separated for ever ; fortune may some day bring you together again. I could not hear such an idea started without being moved by it. My sighs would find vent ; and I felt at that moment so strong an affection for don Alphonso, that I could willingly have turned my back on the archbishop and all the fine prospects that were opening to me, and have gone back to the castle of Leyva, had but a mortification taken place in the back of the scare crow which had frightened me away. Don Ferdinand was not insensible to the emotions that agitated me, and felt himself so much obliged by them, that he took his leave with the assurance of the whole family always taking an anxious interest in my fate.

Two months after this worthy gentleman had left us, in the luxuriant harvest of my highest favour, a lowering storm came suddenly over the episcopal

CHAPTER V.

The course which Gil Blas took after the archbishop had given him his dismissal. His accidental meeting with the licentiate who was so deeply in his debt, and a picture of gratitude in the person of a parson.

I MADE the best of my way out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or more properly the dotage of the archbishop, and more in dudgeon at his absurdity, than cast down at the loss of his good graces. For some time it was a moot point whether I should go and lay claim to my hundred ducats; but after having weighed the matter dispassionately, I was not such a fool as to quarrel with my bread and butter. There was no reason why that money, fairly earned, should deprive me of my natural right to make a joke of this ridiculous prelate; in which good deed I promised myself not to be wanting, as often as himself or his homilies were brought upon the carpet in my hearing.

I went therefore and asked the treasurer for a hundred ducats, without telling a word about the literary warfare between his master and me. Afterwards I called on Melchior de la Ronda, to take a

his friend the steward, I made no bones about acknowledging that I was no longer a hanger-on of the church. I even went so far as to particularize the most trivial circumstances attending my resignation, to all which he listened with an attentive ear. After all his fine professions, who would not have expected to see him moved even to tears with the throes of resentful gratitude, to hear him thunder bulls and interdicts against the superannuated archbishop? The devil a bit! he did neither the one thing nor the other. But his countenance fell, and his whole air was that of an absent man; the rest of his dinner was bolted down without the garnish of intermediate talk about Mæcenas; as soon as he had done, he hurried from table without minding grace or gratitude, wished me good day with a cold and distant air, and got off as fast as possible. The unfeeling scoundrel, perceiving that I was no longer in a situation for him to pump any thing out of me, would not even take the trouble to draw a decent veil over his dirty principles. But such a blackguard could excite no other sensation than contempt and laughter. Looking at him with derision, the fittest chastisement for fellows like these, I called after him loud enough to be heard by the whole room: Stop there, you nun's priest! Go and put those two bottles in ice against Mæcenas comes to the Sabine farm! Be sure they are rich, genuine, and old; or they will be a farce to Falernian.

After a light supper, for all the meals at my eating-house were regulated on principles of economy and temperance, I withdrew to my chamber with an anxious longing for the next day.

My sleep was short and interrupted; so that I got up by daybreak. But as it was to be recollectcd that a mistress in high keep was not likely to be visible early in the morning, I passed three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming. It was my business to present myself before her in a trim, not to put her to the blush at acknowledging my acquaintance. I sallied forth about ten o'clock, and knocked at her door, after having enquired her address at the theatre. She was living on the first floor of a large and elegant house. I told a chambermaid who opened the door to me, that a young man wanted to speak with her lady. The chambermaid went in to give my message, when all at once I heard her mistress call out, not in the best tempered tone in the world, Who is the young man? What does he want? Shew him up stairs.

This was a hint to me that my time was ill chosen; that probably her Portuguese lover was at her toilette, and that she spoke so loud, with the laudable design of convincing him that she was not a sort of girl to allow of any impudent intruders. This conjecture of mine turned out to be the fact; the marquis de Marialva lounged away almost every

CHAPTER VII.

Laura's story.

I SHALL just run over to you, as briefly as possible, the circumstances which led me to embrace the theatrical profession.

After you took French leave, so much to your credit, great events happened. My mistress Arsenia, more surfeited with a glut of pleasures, than scandalized at their immorality, renounced the stage, and took me with her to a fine estate which she had just purchased in the neighbourhood of Zamora, with the wages of her sinful life. We soon got acquainted in the town. Our visits there were very frequent; and sometimes for a day or two together. With the exception of these little excursions, we were as closely domesticated as probationers in a nunnery, and almost as piously employed.

On one of our high-days and holidays, don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by chance, and took a liking to me. He soon found an opportunity of speaking with me in private; and, as it is in vain to affect modesty before one who knows me so well, there was some little contrivance of my own to bring the interview about. The young gentleman was not twenty years of age; the very

fication ; he might have sat for the penitent thief in a picture of the crucifixion. He scarcely ever cast a carnal glance towards us Magdalens. You never saw such a face of rank hypocrisy in all your life, though you have spent some part of it under the same roof with the archbishop, and are not unacquainted with the clergy of his diocese.

But to return from this digression ; . . . I met this signor Zendono, who said to me slyly as he passed : Take comfort, my girl ; I am sensibly affected with your wretched case. He said no more, and went on his way, leaving me to make my own comments on so concise and general a text. As he looked like a good man, and there was no positive evidence to set against his looks, I was simpleton enough to fancy that he had taken the trouble of enquiring why I was shut up ; and meant, not finding me so atrocious a culprit as to deserve such shameful insults, to take my part with the corregidor. But I was not up to the tricks of the Biscayan ; he had a much longer head. He was turning over in his mind the scheme of an elopement, and made the proposal to me in profound privacy some days afterwards. My dear Laura, said he, your sufferings have taken such deep possession of my mind, that I have determined to end them. I am perfectly aware that my own ruin is involved in the measure ; but needs must when the tender passion drives. To-morrow morning do I intend to take you out of

still contrives to revive her credit; the comedians of Grenada therefore wrote to offer me an engagement in their company; and by way of evidence that the proposal was not to be scorned, they sent me a statement of their daily receipts and disbursements, with their terms, which seemed to be advantageous. That being the case I closed, though grieved in my heart to part with Phenicia, and Dorothea, whom I loved as well as woman is capable of loving woman. I left the first laudably employed in melting the plate of a little haggling goldsmith, whose vanity so far got the better of his avarice that he must needs have a theatrical heroine for his mistress. I forgot to tell you that on my translation to the stage, from mere whim, I changed the name of Laura to that of Estella; and it was under the latter name that I took this engagement at Grenada.

My first appearance was no less successful here than at Seville; and I soon felt myself wafted along by the sighs of my admirers. But resolving not to favour any except on honourable terms, I kept a guard of modesty in my intercourse with them, which threw dust in their eyes. Nevertheless, not to be the dupe of virtues which pay very indifferently, and were not exactly at home in their new mansion, I was balancing whether or not to take up with a young fellow of mean extraction, who had a place under government, and assumed the style of a gentleman in virtue of his office, with a good table and

they, as their business and desire pointed them: and, for my own poor part, my bent was towards the theatre. It may be proper to observe by the way, that I had all possible reason to be in a good humour. The conversation with my chance companions had been joyous in the extreme; the colour of my fortune was gay and animating; yet for all that I could not help giving way to melancholy, without either knowing why, or being able to reason myself out of it. It was doubtless a prophetic warning of the misfortune which threatened me.

As I entered the green-room, Melchior Zapata came up, and told me in a low voice to follow him. He led me to an unfrequented part of the house, and opened his business thus: Worthy sir, I make it a point of conscience to give you a very serious warning. You are aware that the marquis de Marialva had at first taken a fancy to Narcissa, my wife; he had even gone so far as to fix a day for trying the relish of my rib, when that cockatrice Estella contrived to flyblow the bill of fare, and transfer the banquet to her own untainted charms. Judge then, whether an actress can be gulled instead of gulling, and preserve the sweetness of her temper. My wife has taken it deeply to heart, and there is no species of revenge to which she would not have recourse. A fine opportunity has offered. Yesterday, if you recollect, all our supernumeraries were crowding together to see you. The

me to lodge elsewhere. But I reckoned without my host. There was no one at home but a person to take care of the house, who told me that his master was just gone to the castle of Leyva, having been sent for on account of Seraphina's dangerous illness.

The count's absence was altogether unexpected : here was no longer any inducement to stay at Toledo, and all my plans were changed at once. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither. It came into my head that I might make my way at court, where talents of the first order, as I had heard, were not absolutely necessary to fill situations of the first consequence. On the very next morning I took advantage of back carriage, to be set down in the renowned capital of Spain. Fortune took me kindly by the hand, and introduced me to a higher cast of parts than those I had hitherto filled.

CHAPTER XII.

Gil Blas takes lodgings in a ready-furnished house. He gets acquainted with captain Chinchilla. That officer's character and business at Madrid.

ON my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my headquarters in a lodging-house, where resided, among

nothing. I even went so far as to open my purse to him, and to beg it as a favour that he would draw upon me for whatever he wanted. But he was not one of those folks who never wait to be asked twice on such occasions. So much the reverse, that with a very commendable delicacy on the subject, he thanked me for my kindness, but refused it peremptorily. He afterwards told me that for fear of spunging upon any one, he had accustomed himself by little and little to live with such sobriety, that the smallest quantity of food was sufficient for his subsistence; which was but too true. His daily fare was confined to vegetables, by dint whereof his component parts were confined to skin and bone. That he might have no witnesses how ill he dined, he usually shut himself up in his chamber at that meal. I prevailed so far with him however, by repeated entreaties, as to obtain that we should dine and sup together: then, undermining his pride by little indirect artifices of compassion, I ordered more provision and wine than I could consume to my own share. I pressed him to eat and drink. At first he made difficulties about it; but in the end there was no resisting my hospitality. After a time, his modesty becoming fainter as his diet was more flush, he helped me off with my dinner and lightened my bottle almost without asking.

One day after four or five glasses, when his stomach had renewed its intimacy with a more

had settled his whole exchequer on me. I would as soon take your word as your bond, for my own part, replied the nimble-footed messenger of don Rodrigo; I know that it will stand the assay; but you have to deal with a little creature who knows herself, and naturally supposes that she knows all the rest of the world by the same token. Besides, she would like better to take it in the lump; two-thirds to be paid down now in ready money. Why how the devil does she mean that I should get the wherewithal? bawled the captain in a quandary. Does she take me for an auditor of public accounts, or treasurer to a charity? You cannot have made her acquainted with my circumstances. Yes but I have, replied Pedrillo; she knows very well that you are poorer than Job; after what she has heard from me, she could think no otherwise. But do not make yourself uneasy, my brain is never at a loss for an expedient. I know an old scoundrel of an usurer, who will take ten per cent if he can get no more. You must assign your first year's pension to him, in acknowledgment for a like valuable consideration from him, which you will in point of fact receive, only deducting the above-mentioned interest. As to security, the lender will take your castle of Chinchilla, for want of better; there will be no dispute about that.

The captain declared his readiness to accept the terms, in case of his being so fortunate as to possess

some little commissions, which were assigned to me from an opinion of my disinterestedness, I was in circumstances to make a very pretty appearance on my arrival at Madrid; which I was not negligent in doing, though the literary tribe in our country are not over punctilious about decency or cleanliness. I soon got acquainted with Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and the whole set of them; but though they were fine fellows, and thought so by the public, I chose for my model in preference, don Lewis de Gongora the incomparable, a young bachelor of Cordova, decidedly the first genius that ever Spain produced. He will not suffer his works to be printed during his lifetime; but confines himself to a private communication among his friends. What is very remarkable, nature has gifted him with the uncommon talent of succeeding in every department of poetry. His principal excellence is in satire; there he outshines himself. He does not resemble, like Lucilius, a muddy stream with a slimy bottom; but is rather like the Tagus, rolling its transparent waters over a golden sand.

You give a fine description of this bachelor, said I to Fabricio; and questionless a character of such merit must have attracted an infinite deal of envy. The whole gang of authors, answered he, good and bad equally, are open-mouthed against him. He deals in bombast, says one; aims at double meanings, luxuriates in metaphor, and affects transposi-

Deslenguado and don Sebastian of Villa Viciosa ! The first is a vinegar-flavoured vintage of Parnassus, a satirist by trade and company ; he hates all the world, and is not liked the better for his taste. As for don Sebastian, he is the milk and honey of criticism ; he would not have the guilt of ill-nature on his conscience for the universe. He has just brought out a comedy without a single idea, which has succeeded with an audience of tantamount ideas ; and he has just now published it to vindicate his innocence.

Gongora's candid pupil was running on in his career of benevolent explanation, when one of the duke de Medina Sidonia's household came up and said : Signor don Fabricio, my lord duke wishes to speak with you. You will find him at home. Nunez, who knew that the wishes of a great lord could not be too soon gratified, left me without ceremony ; but he left me in the utmost consternation, to hear him called don, and thus ennobled, in spite of master Chrysostom the barber's escutcheon, who had the honour to call him father.

upon the wine-cellar: in short, by the practices of these three blood-suckers, a most horrible system of extravagance had found its way into my lord the count's establishment. If you doubt my veracity, added the scullion, only take the trouble of going to-morrow morning about seven o'clock into the neighbourhood of St. Thomas's college, and you will see me with a load upon my back, which will convert your suspicions into certainty. Then you, said I, are in the confidence of these honest purveyors? I am factor to the clerk of the kitchen, answered he; and one of my comrades runs on errands for the steward.

I had the curiosity the next day to loiter about St. Thomas's college at the appointed hour. My informer was punctual to time and place. He brought with him a large tray full of butcher's meat, poultry, and game. I took an account of every article; and drew out the bill of fare in my memorandum book, for the purpose of showing it to my master: at the same time telling my little turnspit to execute his commission as usual.

His Sicilian lordship, naturally warm in his temper, would have turned his countryman and the Italian out of doors together, in the first fury of his anger; but after cooling upon it, he got rid of the former only, and gave me his vacant place. Thus my office of supervisor was suppressed very shortly after its creation; nor did I relinquish it with any

opinion, that there was no danger, my master could not be satisfied without retaining the most eminent about the person of the animal, till he could be pronounced to be in a state of convalescence.

It would be a manifest injustice to the family affections of his Sicilian lordship, not to commemorate all the agonizing sensations of his soul during this period of painful suspense. Would it be thought possible that this tender nurse did not stir from his darling Cupid's bedside all the live-long day? The bandages were never altered or adjusted but in his presence, and he got up two or three times in the night to enquire after his patient. The most provoking part of the business was, that all the servants, and myself in particular, were required to be eternally on the alert, to anticipate the slightest wishes of this ridiculous baboon. In short, there was no peace in the house, till the cursed beast, having recovered from the effects of its fall, got back again to his old tricks and whirligigs. After this shall we be mealy-mouthed about believing Suetonius, when he tells us that Caligula cared more for his horse than for all the world besides, that he gave him more than the establishment and attendance of a senator, and that he even wanted to make him consul? Our wise master stopped little short of the emperor in his partiality to the monkey; and had serious thoughts of purchasing for him the place of corregidor.

imputed, the nurse had not altogether cleared herself from my suspicions. They hovered sometimes over one and sometimes over the other; but let them light where they would, it was all the same to me. I said nothing about the matter to the old woman; not even so much as to haggle about the items of her fine bill. I should not have been an atom the richer for doing so; and we must all live by our trades. The utmost of my malice was to pay her and send her packing three days afterwards.

I am inclined to think that at her departure she gave the apothecary notice of her quitting the premises, and having left me sufficiently in possession of myself to take French leave without acknowledging my obligations to him; for she had not been gone many minutes before he came in puffing and blowing, with his bill in his hand. There under names which had escaped my conscription, though as arrant a physician as the worst of them, he had set down all the hypothetical remedies which he insisted that I had taken during the time when I could take nothing. This bill might truly be called the epitome of an apothecary's conscience. Such being the case, we had a bustle about the payment. I pleaded for an abatement of one half. He swore that he would not take a doit less than his just demand. He kept his oath and yet relaxed; for considering that he had to do with a young man

who might run away from Madrid within four-and-twenty hours, he preferred my offer of three hundred per cent. on the prime cost of his drugs, though a pitiful profit for an apothecary, to the risk of losing all. I counted out the money with an aching heart, and he withdrew, chuckling over his revenge for the scurvy trick I had played him on the day of evacuation.

The physician made his appearance next; for beasts of prey inhabit the same latitudes. I fee'd him for his visits, which had been quite as frequent as necessary, and his object was answered. But he would not leave me without proving how hardly he had earned his money, for that he had not only expelled the enemy from the interior, but had defended the frontiers from the attack of all the disorders on the army list of the *materia medica*. He talked very learnedly, with good emphasis and discretion; so much so, that I did not comprehend one word he said. When I had got rid of him, I flattered myself that the destinies had now done their worst. But I was mistaken; for there came a surgeon whose face I had never seen in the whole course of my life. He accosted me very politely, and congratulated me on the imminent danger I had escaped; attributing the happy issue of my complaints to those which he had himself cut, with the profuse application of bleeding, cupping, blistering, and all sorts of torments; consequent and

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Gil Blas scrapes an acquaintance of some value, and finds wherewithal to make him amends for the count de Galiano's ingratitude. Don Valerio de Luna's story.

IT seemed so strange to have heard not a syllable from Nunez during this long interval, that I concluded he must be in the country. I went to look after him as soon as I could walk, and found the fact to be that he had gone into Andalusia three weeks ago with the duke of Medina Sidonia.

One morning when rubbing my eyes after a sound sleep, Melchior de la Ronda started into my recollection ; and that bringing to mind my promise at Grenada, of going to see his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, it seemed advisable not to defer fulfilling my promise for a single day. I enquired where don Balthazar de Zuniga lived, and went thither straightway. On asking if signor Joseph Navarro was at home, he made his appearance immediately. We exchanged bows with a

I immediately went thither to estimate the loss. Informing myself to a nicety, and on the spot, respecting all the particulars of the unlucky accident, I drew up a detailed narrative which Monteser shewed to the duke of Lerma. That minister, though vexed at the circumstance, was struck with the memorial, and enquired who was the author. Don Diego thought it not enough to answer the question, but spoke of me in such high terms, that his excellency recollected it six months afterwards, on occasion of an incident I shall now relate, had it not been for which I might never, perhaps, have been employed at court. It was as follows :—

There lived at that time in Princes Street an elderly lady, by name Inesilla de Cantarilla. Her birth was a matter of mystery. Some said she was the daughter of a musical instrument-maker, and others gave her a high military extraction. However that might be, she was a very extraordinary personage. Nature had gifted her with the singular talent of winning men's hearts in defiance of time, and in contradiction to her own laws ; for she was now entering upon the fourth quarter of her century. She had been the reigning toast of the old court, and levied tribute on the passions of the new. Age, though at daggers drawn with beauty, was completely foiled in its assault upon her charms ; they might be somewhat faded, but the touch of sympathy they excited in their decline was more

been interpreted into a virtuous struggle, a conquest over the weakness of his heart. But his purposes were far different; he had another scene to act before his mother. Unable to withstand the total overthrow of all his wild projects, he basely yielded to despair. Drawing his sword, he plunged it in his own bosom. His fate resembled that of Oedipus, with this distinction; that the Theban put out his own eyes, from remorse for the crime he had perpetrated, while the Castilian, on the contrary, committed suicide, from disappointment at the frustration of his purposes.

The unhappy don Valerio was not released from his sufferings immediately. He had leisure left for recollection, and for making his peace with heaven, before he rushed into the presence of his maker. As his death vacated one of the secretaryships on the duke of Lerma's establishment, that minister, not having forgotten my memoir on the subject of the fire, nor the high character he had heard of me, nominated me to succeed to the post in question.

thing sufficiently sumptuous for dinner. To have selected from the bill of fare, might have looked as if I descended to the meanness of calculation ; I therefore told him to send up the best the house afforded. My orders were punctually obeyed ; and the anxious assiduity of the attendance pampered my fancy as much as the dishes did my palate. As to the bill, I had nothing to do with it but to pay it. Down went a pistole upon the table, and the waiters pocketed the difference, which was somewhat more than a quarter. After this display of grandeur, I strutted out, practising those obstreperous clearings of the throat, which announce, by empty sound, the approach of a substantial coxcomb.

There was at the distance of twenty yards a large house with lodgings to let, principally frequented by foreign nobility. I rented at once a suite of apartments, consisting of five or six rooms elegantly furnished. From my style of living, any one would have thought I had two or three thousand ducats of yearly income. The first month was paid in advance. Afterwards I returned to business, and employed the whole afternoon in going on with what I had begun in the morning. In a closet adjoining mine there were two other secretaries ; but their office was only to copy out fair. I got acquainted with them as we were shutting up for the evening ; and, by way of smoothing the first overtures towards friendship, invited them home with me to my tavern, where I or-

CHAPTER VI.

Gil Blas gives the duke of Lerma a hint of his wretched condition. That minister deals with him accordingly.

WHEN the king kept his court at the Escurial, all the world was at free quarters : under such easy circumstances I did not feel where the saddle galled. My bed was in a wardrobe near the duke's chamber. One morning that minister, having got up according to his cursed custom at daybreak, made me take my writing apparatus, and follow him into the palace gardens. We went and sat down under an avenue of trees ; myself, as he would have it, in the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat : his attitude was with a paper in his hand ; and any one would have supposed he had been reading. At some distance, we must have looked as if the scale of Europe was to turn upon our decision ; but between ourselves, who partook of it, the talk was miserably trifling.

For more than an hour had I been tickling his excellency's fancy with all the conceits, engendered by a merry nature and an eccentric course of life, when two magpies perched on the trees above us. Their clack and clatter was so obstreperous, as to

practised in the mysterious language of birds ; for which reason, my grand suite of apartments fortunately being vacant, I engaged them for the second time. My next business was to send for an eminent tailor, who arrayed the pretty persons of all the fine gentlemen in town. He took my measure, and then introduced me to a draper, who sold me five ells of cloth, the exact quantity, as he said, to make a suit for a man of my size. Five ells for a light Spanish dress ! Whither did this draper and tailor expect to go ? . . . But we must not be uncharitable. Tailors who have a reputation to support require more materials for the exercise of their genius, than the vulgar snippers of the shopboard. I then bought some linen, of which I was very bare; an assortment of silk stockings, and a laced hat.

With such an equipage, there was no doing without a footman ; so that I desired Vincent Ferrero my landlord to look out for one. Most of the foreigners who were recommended to his lodgings, on their arrival at Madrid, were wont to hire Spanish servants ; and this was the means of turning his house into a register office. The first who offered was a lad of so mortified and devotional an aspect, that I would have nothing to say to him ; he put me in mind of Ambrose de Lamela. I am quite out of conceit, said I to Ferrero, with these pious coat-brushers ; I have been taken in by them already.

I had scarcely turned virtue in a livery out of

to know the nature of the affair which brings you to court; because it may be such as to preclude me from speaking to the minister in your favour. Give me therefore, if you please, the particulars faithfully, and rest assured that I shall enter warmly into your interests, if they are proper to be espoused by a man who moves in my sphere. My young client promised to be sincere in his representation, and began his narrative in the following words.

CHAPTER VIII.

History of don Roger de Rada.

DON Anastasio de Rada, a gentleman of Grenada, was living happily in the town of Antequera, with donna Estephania his wife, who united every charm of person and mind with the most unquestionable virtue. If her affection was lively towards her husband, his love for her was violent beyond all bounds. He was naturally prone to jealousy; and though wantonness could never assume such a semblance as his wife's, his thoughts were not quite at rest upon the subject. He was apprehensive lest some secret enemy to his repose might make some attempt upon his honour. His eye was turned askance upon all his friends, except don Huberto de Hor-

dales, who frequented the house without suspicion in quality of Estephania's cousin, and was the only man in whom he ought not to have confided.

Don Huberto did actually fall in love with his cousin, and ventured to make his sentiments known, in contempt of consanguinity and the ties of friendship. The lady, who was considerate, instead of making an outcry which might have led to fatal consequences, reproved her kinsman gently, represented to him the extreme criminality of attempting to seduce her, and dishonour her husband, and told him very seriously that he must not flatter himself with the most distant hope.

This moderation only inflamed the seducer's appetite the more. Taking it for granted that as a woman who had been accustomed to save appearances, she only wanted to be more strongly urged, he began to adopt little freedoms of more warmth than delicacy; and had the assurance one day to put the question home to her. She repulsed him with unbridled indignation, and threatened to refer the punishment of his offence to don Anastasio. Her suitor, alarmed at such an intimation, promised to drop the subject; and Estephania in the candour of her soul forgave him for the past.

Don Huberto, a man totally devoid of principle, could not feel his passion to be foiled, without entertaining a mean spirit of revenge. He knew

I believe my senses? And can this be? Don Anastasio? Father! What is it you say, young man? exclaimed he in his turn, with surprise and agitation equal to my own. Are you that ill-fated infant, still in its mother's womb, when I sacrificed her to my fury? Yes, said I; none other did the virtuous Estephania bring into the world, after the fatal night when you left her weltering in her own blood.

Don Anastasio stifled my words in his embraces. For a quarter of an hour, we could only mingle our inarticulate sighs and exclamations. After exhausting our tender recollections, and indulging in the wild expression of our feelings, my father lifted his eyes to heaven, in gratitude for Estephania saved; but the next moment, as if doubtful of his bliss, he demanded by what evidence his wife's innocence had been cleared. Sir, answered I, none but yourself ever doubted it. Her conduct had been uniformly spotless. You must be undeceived. Know that don Huberto was a traitor. In proof of this I unfolded all his perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and his own confession before he expired.

My father was less delighted at his liberty restored, than at these happy tidings. In the forgetfulness of ecstacy, he repeated all his former transports. His approbation of me was ardent and entire. Come, my son, said he, let us set out for Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife, whom I have treated so unworthily. Since

mother, considering home as insecure, was painfully anxious about me. It was therefore necessary to set out that very night for court, whither I come to solicit my pardon, and hope to obtain it by your generous intercession with the prime minister.

The gallant son of don Anastasio thus closed his narrative ; after which I observed with a self-sufficient physiognomy : It is well, signor don Roger ; the offence seems to me to be venial. I will undertake to lay the case before his excellency, and may venture to promise you his protection. The thanks my client lavished would have passed in at one ear and out at the other, if they had not been backed by assurances of more substantial gratitude. But when once that string was touched, every nerve and fibre of my frame vibrated in unison. On the very same day did I relate the whole story to the duke, who allowed me to present the gentleman, and addressed him thus : Don Roger, I have been informed of the duel which has brought you to court ; Santillane has laid all the particulars before me. Make yourself perfectly easy : you have done nothing but what the circumstances of the case might almost warrant ; and it is especially on the ground of wounded honour, that his majesty is best pleased to extend his grace and favour. You must be committed for mere form's sake ; but you may depend on it, your confinement shall be of short duration. In Santillane

might as modestly have appended “the great” to the tail of his name, as the most noted scoundrel of antiquity. The second customer he brought me was a printer, who manufactured books of chivalry, and had made his fortune by waging war against common sense. This printer had pirated a work belonging to a brother printer, and his edition had been seized. For three hundred ducats I rescued his copies out of jeopardy, and saved him from a heavy fine. Though this was a transaction beneath the prime minister’s notice, his excellency condescended at my request to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands; the occasion was thus: A Portuguese vessel had been taken by a Barbary corsair, and retaken by a privateer from Cadiz. Two-thirds of the cargo belonged to a merchant at Lisbon, who, having claimed his due to no purpose, came to the court of Spain in search of a protector, with sufficient credit to procure him restitution. I took up his cause, and he recovered his property, deducting the sum of four hundred pistoles, paid to me in consideration of my disinterested zeal for justice.

And now most surely the reader will call out to me at this place: Well said, good master Santillane! Make hay while the sun shines. You are on the high road to fortune; push forward, and outstrip your rivals. Oh! let me alone for that. I spy, or my eyes deceive me, my servant coming in with a new

Opinions are nearly balanced ; the disputants are nearly in a passion ; as argument weakens, invective grows stronger ; they get from bad to worse ; over goes the table, and up jump they to fisty-cuffs. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, my footman, and myself, have scarcely lungs or strength to bring them to their senses. The moment the battle was over, off scampered they as if my house had been a tavern, without the slightest apology for their ill behaviour.

Nunez, on whose word I had anticipated a very pleasant party, looked rather blue at this conclusion. Well, my friend, said I, what do you think of your literary acquaintance now ? As sure as Apollo is on Parnassus, you brought me a most blackguard set. I will stick to my clerks ; so talk no more to me about authors. I shall take care, answered he, not to invite any of them to a gentleman's house again ; for these are the most select and well-mannered of the tribe.

lous thing that you should have played the Joseph in the hey-day of your blood, when so many grey-beards around you are playing the Elder. I admire the quickness of your apprehension, replied I with a smile. Yes, my friend, a mistress is that something still wanting ; and you shall choose for me. But I forewarn you that I am nice-hungry ; and must have a pretty person with more than passable manners. The sort of thing that you require, returned Scipio, is not always to be met with in the market. Yet, as luck will have it, we are in a town, where every thing is to be got for money ; and I am in hopes that your commission will not hang long on hand.

Accordingly within three days he pulled me by the sleeve : I have discovered a treasure ! A young lady whose name is Catalina, of good family and matchless beauty, living with her aunt in a small house, where they make both ends meet by clubbing their little matters, and set the slanderous world at defiance. Their waiting-maid, a girl of my acquaintance, has given me to understand that their door, though barred against all impudent intruders, would turn upon its hinges to a rich and generous suitor, if he would only consent, for fear of prying neighbours, not to pay his visits till after night-fall, and then in the most private manner possible. Hereupon I magnified you as the properest gentleman in the world ; and intreated piety in pattens to offer your humble services to the ladies. She pro-

let the ladies know when they might expect him. *Secundo*, that the prince should be introduced to the said ladies as a private gentleman, accompanied only by myself and his principal purveyor.

After this capitulation, the aunt and niece were upon the best terms possible with me ; they behaved as if we had known one another from our cradles ; on the strength of which I ventured on some little familiarities, which were not taken at all unkindly ; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and slabbered me over with inexpressible fondness. It is marvellous to think with what facility a tender connection is formed between persons in the same line of trade, but of opposite sexes. It might have been suspected by an eye-witness of my departure, in all the plenitude of warm and repeated salutation, that my visit had been more successful than it was.

The count de Lemos was highly delighted when I announced the long expected discovery. I spoke of Catalina in terms which made him long to see her. The following night I took him to her house, and he owned that I had beat the bush to some purpose. He told the ladies, he had no doubt but the prince of Spain would be fully satisfied with my choice of a mistress, who, on her part, would have reason to be well pleased with such a lover ; that the young prince was generous, good-tempered, and amiable ; in short, he promised in a few days to

outtune the jingle of the spheres. She complied like a good-humoured goddess; played some tender airs, and sung so deliciously, that the prince flopped down on his knees in a tumult of love and pleasure. But scenes like these are vapid in description: suffice it to say that hours glided away like moments in this sweet delirium, till the approach of day warned the sober plotters of the lunacy to provide for their patient's safety, and their own. When the parties were all snugly housed, we gave ourselves as much credit for the negotiation, as if we had patched up a marriage with a princess.

The next morning, the duke of Lerma desired to know all the particulars. Just as I had finished relating them, the count de Lemos came in and said: The prince of Spain is so engrossed by Cata-lina; he has taken so decided a fancy to her, that he actually proposes to be constant. He wanted to have sent her jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles to-day; but his finances were aground. My dear Lemos, said he, addressing himself to me, you must absolutely get me that sum. I know it is very inconvenient; you have pawned your credit for me already; but my heart owns itself your debtor; and if ever I have the means of returning your kindness by more than empty words, your fortunes shall not suffer by your complaisance. In answer, I assured him that I had friends and credit, and promised to bring him what he wanted.

There is no difficulty about that, said the duke to his nephew. Santillane will bring you the money; or, to save trouble, he may purchase the jewels; for he is an admirable judge, especially of rubies. Are you not, Gil Blas? This stroke of satire was of course designed to entertain the count at my expense; and it was successful; for his curiosity could not but be excited to know the meaning of the mystery. No mystery at all, replied his uncle with a broad laugh. Only Santillane took it into his head one day to exchange a diamond for a ruby; and the barter operated equally to the advantage of his pocket and his penetration.

Had the minister stopped there, I should have come off cheaply; but he took the trouble of dressing out in aggravated colours the trick that Camilla and don Raphael played me, with a most provoking enlargement of the circumstances most to the disadvantage of my sagacity. His excellency having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to attend the count de Lemos to a jeweller's, where we selected trinkets for the prince of Spain's inspection; and they were entrusted to my care to be delivered to Catalina.

There can be little doubt of my kind reception on the following night, when I displayed a fine pair of drop ear-rings, as the presents of my embassy. The two ladies, out of their wits at these costly tokens of the prince's love, suffered their tongues to run into a gossiping strain, while they were thanking me

him. Oh ! for the matter of that, interrupted I with an air of confidence, let him scrutinize me as closely as he pleases, the result cannot fail to be in my favour.

All this happened as it was foretold. I was introduced at the goldsmith's, who received me with the familiarity of an old acquaintance. A vulgar dog, but warm ! and as troublesome with his civility, as a prude with her virtue. He presented me to signora Eugenia his wife, and the youthful Gabriela his daughter. I opened wide my budget of compliments, without infringing the treaty, and prattled soft nothings to them, in all the vacuity of courtly dialogue.

Gabriela, with submission to my secretary's better taste, was not altogether so repulsive ; whether by dint of being outrageously bedizened, or because I looked at her in the raree-shew box of her fortune. A charming house this of signor Gabriel ! There is less silver, I verily believe, in the Peruvian mines, than under his roof. That metal presented itself to the view in all directions, under a thousand different forms. Every room, and especially that where we were entertained, was a fairy palace. What a bird's eye view for a son-in-law ! The old codger, to do the thing genteelly, had collected five or six merchants about him, all plodding spirit-wearing personages. Their tongues could only talk of what their hearts were set upon : it was high change all

true friend. We have all our weak side, as you well know. Tell me where signor de Santillane is fallible. Is he fond of play? does he wench? On what lay are his snug little vices? Do not fight shy, I beseech you. It is very unkind, signor Gabriel, to put such a question, retorted the go-between. Your interest is more to me than my master's. If he had any slippery propensities, likely to make your daughter unhappy, would I ever have proposed him as a son-in-law? The deuce a bit! I am too much at your service. But, between ourselves, he has but one fault; that of being faultless. He is too wise for a young man. So much the better, replied the goldsmith; he is the more like me. You may go, my friend, and tell him he shall have my daughter, and should have her, though he knew no more of the minister than I do.

As soon as my secretary had reported this conversation, I flew to thank Salero for his partiality. He had already told his mind to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand by their reception, that they yielded without disgust. I carried my father-in-law to the duke of Lerma, whom I had informed the evening before, and presented him with due ceremony. His excellency gave him a most gracious reception, and congratulated him on having chosen a man for his son-in-law, for whom he himself had so great a regard, and meant to do such great things. Then did he expatiate on my good

qualities, and, in short, said so much to my honour, that honest Gabriel thought he had met with the best match in Spain. His joy oozed out at his eyes. On parting, he pressed me in his arms, and said : My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that the affair shall be finally settled within a week at latest.

CHAPTER II.

In the progress of political vacancies, Gil Blas recollects that there is such a man in the world as don Alphonso de Leyva; and renders him a service from motives of vanity.

LET US leave my marriage to take care of itself for a season. The order of events requires me to recount a service rendered to my old master don Alphonso. I had entirely forgotten that gentleman's existence; but a circumstance recalled it to my recollection.

The government of Valencia became vacant at this time; and put me in mind of don Alphonso de Leyva. I considered within myself that the employment would suit him to a nicety; and determined to

apply for it on his behalf, not so much out of friendship as ostentation. If I could but procure it for him, it would do me infinite honour. I told the duke of Lerma that I had been steward to don Cæsar de Leyva and his son ; and that having every reason in the world to feel myself obliged to them, I should take it as a favour if he would give the government of Valencia to one or other of them. The minister answered : Most willingly, Gil Blas. I love to see you grateful and generous. Besides, the family stands very high in my esteem. The Leyvas are loyal subjects ; so that the place cannot be better bestowed. You may take it as a wedding present, and do what you like with it.

Delighted at the success of my application, I went to Calderona in a prodigious hurry, to get the patent made out for don Alphonso. There was a great crowd, waiting in respectful silence, till don Rodrigo should come and give audience. I made my way through, and the closet door opened as if by sympathy. There were no one knows how many military and civil officers, with other people of consequence, among whom Calderona was dividing his attentions. His different reception of different people was curious. A slight inclination of the head was enough for some ; others he honoured with a profusion of courtly grimace, and bowed them out of the closet. The proportions of civility were weighed to a scruple. On the other hand, there

speech in solitude. I passed the night, not in bewailing my fate, for it had not yet presented itself in all its aggravation, but in endeavouring to divine its cause. Doubtless it must have been Calderona's handywork. And yet though his branching honours might have pressed thick upon his senses, I could not conceive how the duke of Lerma could have been induced to treat me so inhumanly. Sometimes I apprehended my arrest to have been without his excellency's knowledge: at other times I thought him the contriver of it, for some political reasons, such as weigh with ministers when they sacrifice their accomplices at the shrine of state policy.

My mind was vibrating to and fro with these various conjectures, when the dawn peeping in at my little grated window, presented to my sight all the horror of the place where I was confined. Then did I vent my sorrows without ceasing; and my eyes became two springs of tears, flowing inexhaustibly at the remembrance of my prosperous state. Pending this paroxysm of grief, a turnkey brought my day's allowance of bread and water. He looked at me, and on the contemplation of my tear-besprinkled visage, gaoler as he was, there came over him a sentiment of pity: Do not despair, said he. This life is full of crosses; but mind them not. You are young; after these days, you will live to see better. In the mean time, eat at the king's mess with what appetite you may.

My comforter withdrew with this quaint invita-

went back to don George's, with a special injunction that my windows should be fast shut for some days.

Madam, said she, going up to donna Helena, I met don Gaston. He must needs endeavour to come round me with his flattering speeches. In tremulous accents, like a culprit pleading against his sentence, he begged to know whether I had spoken to you on his behalf. Then, in prompt and faithful compliance with your orders, I snapped up the words out of his mouth. To be sure, my tongue did run at a fine rate against him. I called him all manner of names, and left him in the street like a stock, staring at my termagent loquacity. I am delighted, answered donna Helena, that you have disengaged me from that troublesome person. But there was no occasion to have snubbed him so unmercifully. A creature of your degree should always keep a good tongue in its mouth. Madam, replied the domestic, one cannot get rid of a determined lover, by mincing one's words. Though it comes to much the same thing when one flies into a passion. Don Gaston, for instance, was not to be bullied out of his senses. After having given it him on both sides of his ears, as I told you, I went on that errand of yours to the house of your relation. The lady, as ill-luck would have it, kept me longer than she ought. I say longer than she ought, because my plague and torment met me on my return. Who the deuce would have thought of seeing him? It

put me all in a twitter; but then my tongue, which at other times is apt to be in a twitter, stuck motionless in my mouth. While my tongue stuck motionless in my mouth, what did he do? He slid a paper into my hand without giving me time to consider whether I should take it or no, and made off in a moment.

After this introduction, she drew my letter from under her stays, and gave it with a half banter to her mistress, who affected to read it in humorous scorn, but digested the contents most greedily, and then put on the starch, offended prude. In good earnest, Felicia, said she with all the gravity she could assume, you were extremely off your guard, quite bewildered and fascinated, to have taken the charge of such an epistle. What construction would don Gaston put upon it? What must I think of it myself? You give me reason, by this strange behaviour, to mistrust your fidelity, while he must suspect me of encouraging his odious suit. Alas! he may, perhaps, lay that flattering unction to his soul, that my love is legible in these characters, and not his trespass. Only consider how low you lay my towering pride. Oh! quite the reverse, madam, answered the petticoated pleader; it is impossible for him to think that; and if he did, he would soon be convinced with a flea in his ear. I shall tell him, when next we meet, that I have delivered his letter, that you glanced at the superscription with petrify-

the emotions of her mistress on my misfortune. Now, like another Paris, I thought Troy well lost for my Helen, and blessed the happy consequences of my wound. Don George allowed me to speak with his daughter in presence of her attendant. What a heavenly interview! I begged and prayed the lady so earnestly to tell me, whether her sufferance of my vows was forced upon her by her father, that she at length confessed her obedience to be in unison with her inclinations. After so delicious a declaration, my whole soul was given up to love and pleasurable gratifications. Our nuptials were to be graced by a magnificent procession of all the principal people in Coria and the neighbourhood.

I gave a splendid party at my aunt's country-house, in the suburbs on the side of Manroi. Don George, his daughter, the family, and friends on both sides were present. There was a concert of vocal and instrumental music, with a company of strolling players, to represent a comedy. In the middle of the festivities, some one whispered me that a man wanted to speak with me in the hall. I got up from table to go and see who it was. The stranger looked like a gentleman's servant. He put a letter into my hand, containing these words: "If you have any sense of honour, as a knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to attend to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi. There you will find an antagonist, ready to give you your

All this was performed within three hours. Donna Eleonora rather triumphed than mourned over a catastrophe, which restored my injured honour; and sent me large remittances for my travels abroad, till the affair had blown over.

Not to dwell on indifferent circumstances, suffice it to say, that I embarked for Italy, and equipped myself so as to make a respectable figure at the several courts.

While I was endeavouring to beguile the weary hours of absence, Helena was weeping at home from the same cause. Instead of joining in the family resentment, her heart was panting for a compromise, and for my speedy return. Six months had already elapsed, and I firmly believe that her constancy would have been proof against the attack of time, had time been seconded by no more powerful ally. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western coast of Galicia, came to Coria, to take possession of a rich inheritance unsuccessfully contested by a near relation. He liked that country so much better than his own, that he made it his principal residence. Combados was a personable man. His manners were gentle and well-bred, his conversation most insinuating. With such a passport, he soon got into the best company, and knew all the family concerns of the place.

It was not long before he heard of don George's daughter, and of her extraordinary beauty. This

touched his curiosity nearly: he was eager to behold so formidable a lady. For this purpose, he endeavoured to worm himself into the good graces of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old gentleman already looking on him as a son-in-law, gave him free admission to the house, and the liberty of conversing with donna Helena in his presence. The Galician soon became deeply enamoured of her: indeed it was the common fate of all who had ever beheld her charms. He opened his heart to don George, who consented to his paying his addresses, but told him that so far from offering violence to her inclination, he should never interfere in her choice. Hereupon don Blas pressed every device that impassioned ingenuity could suggest into his service, to melt and warm the icicles of reserve; but the lady was impenetrable to his arts, fast bound in the fetters of an earlier love. Felicia, however, was in the new suitor's interest, convinced of his merit by the universal argument. All the faculties of her soul were called forth in his cause. On the other hand, the father urged his wishes and intreaties. Thus was donna Helena tormented for a whole year with their importunities, and yet her faith continued unshaken.

Combados finding that don George and Felicia took up his cause with very little success, proposed an expedient for conquering prejudice to the following effect. We will suppose a merchant of Coria to

henceforward presses, to detach you from don Gaston. It may well overwhelm you with shame, to have been his dupe so long. Here is an undeniable proof of his inconstancy. Only read this letter just received by a merchant of Coria from Italy. The trembling Helena caught at this forged paper; glanced over the writing; then weighed every expression, and stood aghast at the import of the whole. A keen pang of tender disappointment wrung from her a few reluctant tears; but pride came to her assistance; she wiped away the falling drops of weakness, and said to her father in a determined tone: Sir, you have just been witness of my folly; now bear testimony to my triumph over myself. The delusion is past; don Gaston is the object of my utter contempt. I am ready to meet don Blas at the altar, and be beforehand with the traitor in the pledge of our transferred affections. Don George, transported with joy at this change, embraced his daughter, extolled her spirit to the skies, and hastened the necessary preparations, with all the self-complacency of a successful plotter.

Thus was donna Helena snatched from me. She threw herself into the arms of Combados in a pet, not listening to the secret whispers of love within her breast, nor suspecting a story which ought to have seemed so improbable in the annals of true passion. The haughty are always the victims of

brought to bear. To get at the truth, I determined on applying to Felicia's friend, Theodora. There I met with Felicia herself, who was confounded at my unwelcome presence, and would have escaped from the necessity of explanation. But I stopped her. Why do you avoid me? said I. Has your perjured mistress forbidden you to give ear to my complaints? or would you make a merit with the ungrateful woman, of your voluntary refusal?

Sir, answered the plotting abigail, I confess my fault, and throw myself on your mercy. Your appearance here has filled me with remorse. My mistress has been betrayed; and unhappily, in part by my agency. The particulars of their infernal device followed this avowal, with an endeavour to make me amends for its lamentable consequence. To this effect, she offered me her services with her mistress, and promised to undeceive her; in a word, to work night and day, that she might soften the rigour of my sufferings, and open the career of hope.

I pass over the numberless contradictions she experienced, before she could accomplish the projected interview. It was at length arranged to admit me privately, while don Blas was at his hunting-seat. The plot did not linger. The husband went into the country; and they sent for me to his lady's apartment.

My onset was reproachful in the extreme; but my mouth was soon shut upon the subject. It is useless

tainer, and your interest will probably be promoted by it in the end. When the duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will not fail to give you a considerable post, and thus retrieve the character of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.

CHAPTER VII.

Scipio finds Gil Blas out in the tower of Segovia, and brings him a budget of news.

OUR conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who came into the room, and addressed me thus : Signor Gil Blas, I have just been speaking with a young man at the prison gate. He enquired if you were not here ; and looked much mortified at my refusal to satisfy his curiosity. Noble governor, said he, with tears in his eyes, do not reject my most humble petition. I am signor de Santillane's principal domestic, and you will do an act of charity by allowing me to see him. You pass for a kind-hearted gentleman in Segovia ; I hope you will not deny me the favour of conversing for a few minutes with my dear master, who is unfortunate rather than criminal. In short, continued don Andrew, the lad

be far distant, as you were put upon his majesty's pension list of prisoners without the duke of Lerma's knowledge or consent.

I asked Scipio how he knew his excellency to have had no share in my arrest. You may depend on it, answered he: my information is undeniable. One of my friends in the duke of Uzeda's confidence acquainted me with all the circumstances of your imprisonment. Calderona, having discovered by a spy, that signora Sirena, with the handle of an alias to her name, was receiving night visits from the prince of Spain, and that the count de Lemos managed that intrigue by the pandarism of signor de Santillane, determined to be revenged on the whole knot. To this end, he waited on the duke of Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The duke, overjoyed at such a fine opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to bestir himself. He laid his information before the king, and painted the prince's danger in the most lively colours. His majesty was much angered, and shewed that he was so, by sending Sirena to the nunnery provided for such frail sisters, banishing the count de Lemos, and condemning Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.

This, pursued Scipio, is what my friend told me. Hence, you gather your misfortune to be the duke of Uzeda's handywork, or rather Calderona's.

Thus it seemed probable that my affairs might be reinstated in time; that the duke of Lerma, cha-

CHAPTER IX.

Scipio's second journey to Madrid. Gil Blas is set at liberty on certain conditions. Their departure from the tower of Segovia, and conversation on their journey.

WHILE waiting for Scipio's return from Madrid, I began a course of study. Tordesillas furnished me with more books than I wanted. He borrowed them from an old officer who could not read, but had fitted up a magnificent library, that he might pass for a man of learning. Above all, I delighted in moral essays and treatises, because they abounded in common places, according with my antipathy to courts, and philosophic relish of solitude.

Three weeks elapsed before I heard a syllable from my negotiator, who returned at length with a cheerful countenance, and news to the following effect: By the intercession of a hundred pistoles with the chambermaid, and her intercession with her mistress, the prince of Spain has been prevailed with to plead for your enlargement with his royal father. I hastened hither to announce these happy tidings, and must return immediately to put the last hand to my work. With these words, he left me, and went back to court.

tiquity? Surely we may indulge the carnal man a little, without any reasonable offence to the spiritual. Since we have, by the blessing of providence and my forecast, wherewithal to keep the spit and the spigot in exercise, do not let us take up our abode with famine and wretchedness. As soon as we get settled, we must stock our cellar, and establish a respectable larder, like people who know what is what, and do not separate themselves from the vulgar crowd to renounce the good things of this life, but to taste them with a more exquisite relish. As Hesiod says,

Enjoy thy riches with a liberal soul;
Plenteous the feast, and smiling be the bowl.

And again,

To stint the wine a frugal husband shows,
When from the middle of the cask it flows.

What the devil, master Scipio, interrupted I in my turn, you can cap verses out of the Greek poets! And pray where did you get acquainted with Hesiod? In very learned company, answered he. I lived some time with a walking dictionary at Salamanca; a fellow up to the elbows in quotation and commentary. He could put a large volume together like a house of cards. His library furnished him with a hodge-podge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin common places, which he translated into buckram

